

Interesting Associations Among Sexual Health Service Utilization and School Exposure to Sexual Health Information

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Background & Research Purpose

- By senior year, 58.1% of high schoolers have had sex¹
- Sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) have been steadily rising for the past four years²
- 15-24 year-olds make up half of the 20 million new STD infections every year³
- Condom use at last intercourse has decreased from its peak of 63% in 2006¹
- Prevalence of not using any contraception has not changed significantly since 2007¹

Study Purpose: To independently test the association of exposure to learning about pregnancy and AIDS to the subsequent utilization of:

- Family planning services
- STD/HIV testing and/or treatment
- Desire to become pregnant
- Intention to talk about contraceptives or STDs with future sexual partners

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Methods

Participants
4819 adolescents from the Adolescent to Adult National Probability Study
Enrolled in grades 7-12 at time of survey administration

Procedure: <http://www.cpc.unc.edu/projects/addhealth>

Statistical Analysis:
Independent logistic regression analysis performed to determine whether school exposures (Wave I) predicted sexual health service utilization, desire to get pregnant, and STD/contraceptive communication (Wave II).

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Results

Model	B	OR (95% CI)	p
Family Planning Utilization			
Learned about Pregnancy	-0.168	.85 (.58 - 1.23)	0.381
Learned about AIDS	-0.255	.78 (.49 - 1.23)	0.281
STD/AIDS Testing			
Learned about Pregnancy	0.447	1.56 (1.01 - 2.42)	0.045
Learned about AIDS	0.347	1.42 (.816 - 2.45)	0.217
Desire to Get Pregnant			
Learned about Pregnancy	0.182	1.20 (.976 - 1.47)	0.085
Learned about AIDS	0.263	1.30 (1.01 - 1.68)	0.045
Desire to discuss STDs/Contraception w/ Partner			
Learned about Pregnancy	0.49	1.63 (1.41 - 1.89)	<.001
Learned about AIDS	0.45	1.57 (1.30 - 1.89)	<.001

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Discussion

These associations were unexpected.

Ideally: Learning about pregnancy leads to use of family planning services; learning about AIDS leads to STD/HIV testing and/or treatment.

Reality is more complicated: Learning about pregnancy only had an affect on STD/HIV testing and treatment, while learning about AIDS affected neither.

Promisingly, learning about pregnancy and AIDS increases intention to talk about contraceptives and STDs with future sexual partners, as this often increases contraceptive use.

Possible Explanations

- Learning about pregnancy may give adolescents a sense of control over their health, which may lead to more intention and efficacy to discuss contraceptives.
- Discussing contraceptives may lead to more testing and treatment.
- Learning about AIDS may do the same, thus leading to intention to discuss contraceptives.
- Severity of AIDS may also play a role in utilizing STD testing.

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Limitations and Future Results

This analysis did not include adolescent's actual knowledge of pregnancy or AIDS, just their exposure to information in a school setting. Furthermore, these topics may not have been covered in a formal sexual health education class. Pregnancy, for example, may have been covered in a general biology class.

Future research should explore the relationship between knowledge of pregnancy, STDs, and AIDS alongside reported utilization of family planning services and STD testing.

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1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). (2017). STDs in Adolescents and Young Adults. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/stats16/adolescents.htm>

2. CDC. (2018). New CDC analysis shows steep and sustained increases in STDs in recent years. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/newsroom/2018/press-release-2018-std-prevention-conference.html>

3. CDC. (2017). Sexually Transmitted Diseases: Adolescents and Young Adults. Retrieved from: <https://www.cdc.gov/std/life-stages-populations/adolescents-youngadults.htm>

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